

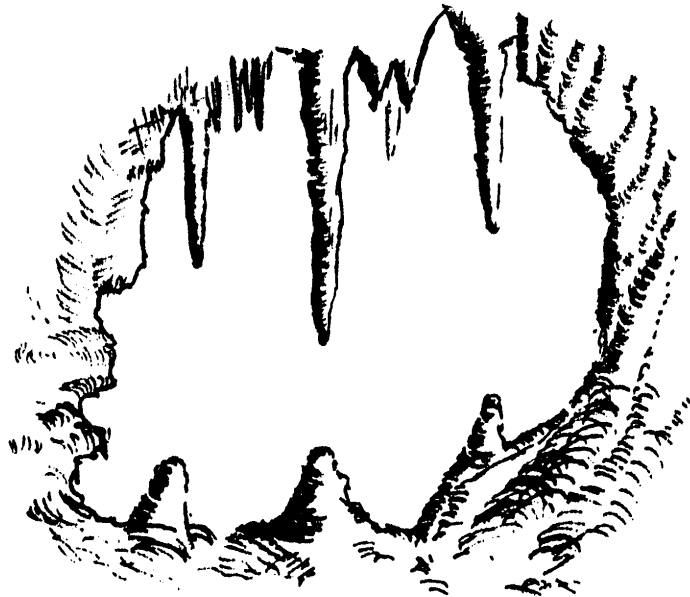
**GLOUCESTER  
SPELEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY**

NEWSLETTER

2000, No. 3 - NOVEMBER



**The Journal**





## **Editorial**

I doubt if this newsletter will appear before this year's AGM, and it is within the bounds of possibility that some other poor, misguided fool will then be Editor of this fantastic publication. Nevertheless here it is. You may notice at the very end, a copyright statement. It was evident that these newsletters had no such protection in the past, so this oversight has been corrected. Copyright is now held by the GSS. If any of you wonderful contributors feel you would like to retain the copyright to your own work, then all you have to do is add the appropriate statement at the end, and it will remain there when it's printed in any GSS newsletter. If anyone else wants to reproduce it, anywhere else, your permission will have to be asked for first.

Joe Duxbury

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At the A.G.M. on October 6th, the following were elected as the Society's committee for the next 12 months:

**Hon. Chairman**

Joe Duxbury

Up Hatherley,  
Cheltenham

Chairman@gloucester-speleo.org

**Hon. Secretary**

Dave Appleing  
10 St. George's Road,  
Cheltenham  
Glos. GL51 8NX

(01242) 581385  
DAppleing@aol.com

**Hon. Treasurer**

Jonathan Maisey,

Treasurer@gloucester-  
speleo.org

**Hon. Librarian**

Steve Tomalin

Quedgeley,  
Gloucester

**Tackle Officer**

Paul Hogan

Bournside,  
Cheltenham

**Training Officer**

Gareth Jones

Churchdown  
Gloucester

**Newsletter Editor**

Joe Duxbury

**Ordinary members**

Maurice Febry

Charlton Kings,  
Cheltenham

Pete Turier

Gloucester,

Elise Jones,

Lancaster

Chris Backhouse

Ross-on-Wye  
Hereford

Trevor Perkins

Gloucester

The club's annual subscription was unchanged at £12.

The position of Meets Secretary was not filled, but until it is clear that we need someone to take on this very easy job, the committee will not be trying to co-opt anybody.

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More from the AGM

GLOSQUOTES:

Collected and presented by Paul Taylor:

"The extra 5/8" that he put in made all the difference"  
Diane ? about Dave A

"When it gets to 6" it gets quite tight" Jo

"You could touch Gareth up if you want". Jo

"I need to get my leg over before I drive the van" Jo

"...to be honest I have probably worn as many dresses as Jo"  
Gareth

"Errgh, he's got a thing" Hollie about Chris B

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## Giant stalactite sale

By Paul Taylor

When I was told of the latest items to go on sale at Clearwell Caves to say I was shocked is somewhat of an understatement: "Stalactites. Available in a wide variety of sizes at substantial prices"!

The story behind their arrival in the Forest of Dean, we are informed, is that they came from China, collected over a number of years by a chap who worked in a quarry. On his death his wife decided to sell the collection to raise some much-needed money. Although not aware of the sum paid for the reported 1 TON (!!) of formations. it has been said, I quote "a substantial sum of money has been invested in this project". The source will of course very likely be unconfirmable as I doubt that they arrived in the UK with a certificate of authenticity. A precedent has now been set and a value placed on calcite.

For many years the GemStones Sales outlets around the country have provided small samples of calcite as part of Geological Sample Starter Kits. But here we have full-blown stalactites. Once a sales outlet has been established then a supply will meet that demand. How long will it be before these items become part of a general sales list up and down the country?

The source of this 1 TON may be legitimate?????

However this questionable supply could of course not meet an increase in demand and quickly lead to the removal of formations from true cave and mine sites. These formations are not like mushrooms that spring up overnight. They take thousands of years to form and once removed another one does not just pop up out of the ground to replace it. Furthermore, calcite once removed from its natural location soon loses its special quality and appearance.

With prime sites right on our doorsteps why bother shipping all the way from China. Or is that the hidden agenda? No questions are likely ever to be asked.

What message does it give out to the visitors to this mine? The possibilities are boundless. Of course it must be said that none of us who venture underground can hold our hands up and say we have never damaged, touched or broken a formation. Yet there is a considerable difference between accidental damage and the *deliberate* removal of formations, from whatever source, for monetary gain.

And before some of you jump on your high horses, I would be the first to admit that as a cave digger for the past 30 years there have been occasions where calcite has been sacrificed to the furtherment of cave and mine exploration. Again however I cannot draw a parallel between this and selling formations.

As cavers we are well aware of the vulnerability of formations and the need for conservation. Hence the use of marker tape, advisory notices, conservation codes and in some instances the use of trip guides to ensure that we protect our underground sites and strike a balance between formation damage and exploration. As an example, recent exploration of a major ongoing lead in Big Sink Cave in the Forest of Dean was halted due to the damage that would have resulted to formations if it had continued.

Yes we can argue that if cavers did not open up sites then damage would not occur. Similarly we could argue that if nobody drove cars there would not be any accidents. Unfortunately we don't live in a utopia world.

On one hand, I feel extremely proud of what my fellow diggers and I have achieved during my caving life to date. And I would hope that others who follow on behind continuing the work would look back on our efforts with pride and respect the decisions and actions that have been taken. Yet on the other hand I feel saddened to think that my name is linked to an area where formations have been made available for sale.

I hope that the proprietors of Clearwell caves consider their future actions with due thought for the image they portray and the responsibility they have to others.

Paul Taylor

Proud to put my name. Not proud to write about such a topic.

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*Editor's comment:*

*Since this article was written, the sale has been withdrawn. But isn't there a law in Britain preventing such practices? You'll be hung, drawn and quartered if you try and sell bird's eggs, or weasel's teeth, but you can apparently sell any amount of rare speleothems with impunity. Here's what they have in the USA...*

Overall there is the **FEDERAL LAW**:

16 USC CHAPTER 63 - FEDERAL CAVE RESOURCES PROTECTION  
(Public Law 100-691, Sec. 2, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4546.)

Which specifies the following:

- (1) Cave - The term "cave" means any naturally occurring void, cavity, recess, or system of interconnected passages which occurs beneath the surface of the earth or within a cliff or ledge (including any cave resource therein, but not including any vug, mine, tunnel, aqueduct, or other manmade excavation) and which is large enough to permit an individual to enter, whether or not the entrance is naturally formed or manmade. Such term shall include any natural pit, sinkhole, or other feature, which is an extension of the entrance.

(5) Cave resource - The term "cave resource" includes any material or substance occurring naturally in caves on Federal lands, such as animal life, plant life, paleontological deposits, sediments, minerals, speleogens, and speleothems.

(a) Prohibited acts

- (1) Any person who, without prior authorization from the Secretary knowingly destroys, disturbs, defaces, mars, alters, removes or harms any significant cave or alters the free movement of any animal or plant life into or out of any significant cave located on Federal lands, or enters a significant cave with the intention of committing any act described in this paragraph shall be punished in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.
- (2) Any person who possesses, consumes, sells, barter or exchanges, or offers for sale, barter or exchange, any cave resource from a significant cave with knowledge or reason to know that such resource was removed from a significant cave located on Federal lands shall be punished in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

Then there are separate **STATE LAWS**:

There are 25 states with cave protection laws (see Table below). The definition of a cave varies widely by state and ranges from a "historic site", as defined in Vermont, to Kentucky's definition of "any naturally occurring void, cavity, recess, or system of interconnecting passages beneath the surface of the earth containing a black zone including natural subterranean water and drainage systems, but not including any mine, tunnel, aqueduct, or other man-made excavation, which is large enough to permit a person to enter." Therefore a Kentucky "cave" includes or is synonymous with cavern and covers everything, and more than contained in the federal definition.

Penalties for vandalism, removing any materials found in caves, killing or removing plant and animal life, breaking or tampering with doors or gates are classified in every state as a misdemeanor ranging from Class A/Class 1 to a Class D/Class 4. The penalty is either criminal or civil and ranges from \$50 to \$2,000 and/or up to one-year imprisonment. A subsequent violation either increases the penalty or becomes a criminal felony. The laws have been tested and a recent example can be found in "A Summary of the Langhorn Cave Vandalism Case" found in the April 1999, issue of the NSS NEWS. The vandal received 40 hours community service, served 4 weekends in jail and received a small fine.

In addition each state has some form of endangered species protection act that includes species found on their own state's list as well as on the federal list. It is beyond the scope of this paper to list all the different state laws and the threatened and endangered species in each state. An excellent web site for an introduction to state wildlife laws is found at <http://ipl.unm.edu/cwl/statbook/intro.html>.

States with Cave Protection Laws

Alabama	Maryland	Pennsylvania
California	Missouri	Tennessee
Florida	Montana	Texas
Georgia	Nevada	Vermont
Idaho	New Mexico	Virginia
Illinois	North Carolina	West Virginia
Indiana	Ohio	Wisconsin
Kentucky	Oklahoma	

Here, for example, is the TENNESSEE CAVE LAW

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11-5-108. Vandalism of caves or caverns.

- (a) It is an offense for any person without the prior permission of the owner, to knowingly:
- (1) Break, break off, crack, carve upon, write or otherwise mark upon, or in any manner destroy, mutilate, injure, deface, mar or harm any natural material found within any cave or cavern, such as stalactites, stalagmites, helictites, anthodites, gypsum flowers or needles, flowstone, draperies, columns or other similar crystalline material formations;
  - (2) Kill, harm or disturb any plant, animal or artifact found therein;
  - (3) Disturb or alter the natural condition of such cave or cavern; or
  - (4) Break, force, tamper with, remove, or otherwise disturb a lock, gate, door or other structure or obstruction designed to prevent entrance to a cave or cavern, whether or not entrance is actually gained.
- (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the owner of property from performing on such owner's property any of the acts set forth in subsection (a).
- (c) An act constituting a violation of this section is to be valued according to the provision of Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 39-11-106(a)(35) and punished as theft under Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 39-14-103.

[Acts 1991, ch. 62 Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 1.]

*Following on from the Forest of Dean radon survey data, and the NRPB information, here is another point of view:*

Cavers Digest 5677, Topic Number: 3

From: bnawrh@webtv.net (William Halliday)  
Date: Wed, 31 May 2000 15:45:06 -0500 (CDT)  
To: cavers@ditell.com  
Subject: Radon dangerous to cavers?

Paul Wendt asks if radon is dangerous to cavers, in the Mendip Hills and elsewhere.

This question arises frequently. My personal belief is that the answer depends on whether one believes the safety limits propounded by the UN, the EPA and similar bodies (which don't all agree, incidentally).

Personally, I don't believe the risk factors propounded by the EPA, for two reasons.

One is the epidemiology of lung cancer, which doesn't match the supposed radon risk factors promulgated by the EPA.

The other is that the EPA figures are dubious extrapolations from extremely high exposures of uranium miners, without acknowledging any tissue healing after low level irradiation - somewhat like insisting that sunburns never heal.

In some uranium-rich sections of the United States, a few caves associated with uranium mines do have really alarmingly high levels of radon and I personally won't have anything to do with them. But the problem here primarily is the uranium and the uranium mines, not the caves per se.

Happy caving, and don't believe everything governments tell you.  
William R. Halliday, M.D.  
NSS #812

ANOTHER GLOSQUOTE:  
About whom was it said:  
"How can someone as fit as you have a belly like that?"?

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*How many of you entered Trevor's "Milleniquiz"? For those of you still struggling with the answers, here they are*

## **MILLENQUIZ TIME - FUNDRAISING FOR GSS**

### ***RESULTS***

Where in Gloucestershire?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Discomforts for the candle - PAINSWICK                                      | 22. R.E. not returned - SAPPERTON                                   |
| 2. Prepared the gift - READY TOKEN   | 23. Large number, beginning to age, heather and cost - DAGLINGWORTH |
| 3. Not for me shelter - ULEY   | 24. England cricketer tar with the valley - COMPTON ABDALE          |
| 4. High class butchery - UPPER SLAUGHTER                                       | 25. Grain stores, fifty about olden you - BARNESLEY                 |
| 5. Iron the weight - PRESTON   | 26. Sunset starts to lose one vowel for another - AVENING           |
| 6. Warning a century and a girl's name - CIRENCESTER                           | 27. Fingertip value - NAILSWORTH                                    |
| 7. Towing - HAWLING  | 28. Substantial residence - STONEHOUSE                              |
| 8. Famous footballing brothers and royalty - CHARLTON KINGS                    | 29. A pole with a hanger on - RODBOROUGH                            |
| 9. Rim - EDGE  | 30. Arid bourn - DRYBROOK   |
| 10. Lofty backward male - HIGHNAM  | 31. Transport era - BUSSAGE   |
| 11. Heating carried - COLESBOURNE  | 32. A horse too soon - COBERLEY                                     |
| 12. Not a blunt point - SHARPNESS  | 33. Twist the seat fifty individually - EASTLEACH                   |
| 13. Chessmen divide - BISHOPS CLEEVE   | 34. Dull rooster loses a hundred - DYMOCK                           |
| 14. Quietens the lair - CALMSDEN   | 35. An old measure extra - ELMORE                                   |
| 15. Swampy pasture - MARSHFIELD  | 36. Tin lizzie - FORD   |
| 16. A flyer's rim - BIRDLIP  | 37. Cold quarter gone - NEWENT                                      |
| 17. The saint that quarrelled - STROUD   | 38. A niggard and his hide out - MISERDEN                           |
| 18. Was Dick here? - WHITTINGTON   | 39. A tree with a crest - OAKRIDGE                                  |
| 19. A strainer for the hair - WINCHCOMBE                                       | 40. Wipe your shoes on your boy - MATSON                            |
| 20. Edward Jenner died here - BERKELEY   |   |
| 21. Electrical unit, joint, ships complement with short sister - AMPNEY CRUCIS |   |

Do you know your TV?

1. Who left the Good Life for ministerial office? - PAUL EDDINGTON
2. Which show has a head to head? - BLANKETY BLANK
3. Where did the Boys from the Black Stuff come from? - LIVERPOOL

4. Who was the first Dr Who? - WILLIAM HARTNELL
5. Who was 13 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>? - ADRIAN MOLE
6. Which sitcom featured Lilo Lil? - BREAD
7. Who Captained Liverpool and a quiz team? - EMLYN HUGHES
8. What is the name of the postman in Cheers? - CLIFF
9. What is the name of the Daleks home? - SKARO
10. Who played Richard III in Blackadder? - PETER COOK



### **DESCENT Magazine**

The bi-monthly magazine for cavers by cavers. The best way of staying informed about what’s happening in the caving world, be it national or international.

The club gets *Descent* at a discounted price and subscriptions for the coming year are now being taken. Cover price is £2.95 but GSS can offer you 6 issues for £15 (a saving of nearly £3). Contact Dave Appleing (01242 581385) before December 10<sup>th</sup> 2000 if you’re interested or want more details.

2000 / 2001



## WINTER PROGRAMME

*A series of audio/visual presentations whose theme is worldwide adventure, travel and exploration.*

*Our lecturers are all widely travelled explorers, mountaineers and well known sportspeople.*

in  
**Bristol**

in association with



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## LECTURE DETAILS

- 1 **Wednesday 4 Oct 2000 William Dalrymple**  
The White Moghuls
- 2 **Wednesday 18 Oct 2000 Jim Curran**  
It's a long way from Mucle Flugga
- 3 **Wednesday 1 Nov 2000 Ben Osborne**  
Life in the Freezer
- 4 **Wednesday 15 Nov 2000 Brian Milton**  
The First Flight Around The World by Microflight Aircraft
- 5 **Wednesday 29 Nov 2000 Sid Perou**  
30 Years as an Adventure Cameraman
- 6 **Wednesday 13 Dec 2000 Alexandra Pratt**  
Notes From Cain's Country – Labrador
- 7 **Wednesday 10 Jan 2001 David Hempleman-Adams**  
The Grand Slam
- 8 **Wednesday 24 Jan 2001 Steve Berry**  
Nanda Devi Inlet Sanctuary
- 9 **Wednesday 7 Feb 2001 Mike Ford**  
Without Permission in Eastern Tibet
- 10 **Wednesday 21 Feb 2001 Brian Blessed**  
THE GINETTE HARRISON MEMORIAL LECTURE  
From Everest to The Lost World
- 11 **Wednesday 7 Mar 2001 Dick Willis**  
Back to Borneo by Underground
- 12 **Wednesday 21 Mar 2001 Doug Scott**  
Moments of Being

## THE GINETTE HARRISON MEMORIAL LECTURE

Tragically last year Britain's foremost woman high altitude mountaineer died in an avalanche while attempting Dhaulagiri. We plan to nominate one lecture each year in memory of GINETTE, who was part of the Bristol climbing scene. Three of this year's lecturers took part in expeditions with GINETTE but Brian Blessed has kindly agreed to be the first Memorial speaker. He has generously donated his fee to a Memorial Fund and WilderNESS Lectures will also match this amount. The money will go to one of GINETTE's favoured charities for disadvantaged children.

## VENUE

All lectures at Chemistry Lecture Theatre, University of Bristol, Woodland Road, Clifton, Bristol (see map)

## TIMES

Doors open at 7.00pm  
 Lectures start at 7.30pm and usually last 1 - 1 1/2 hours

## PRICES

Season Tickets: £56.00  
 Advance: £5.00 Door: £5.50 Concessions: £4.50 (proof of status required)  
 For all lectures except for David Hempleman-Adams, Brian Blessed and Doug Scott, which are:  
 Advance: £7.50 Door: £8.00 Concessions: £7.00 (proof of status required)  
 Please Note  
 Tickets should be purchased from Stanfords (see below) or on the door for cash. Cheques must be made payable to WilderNESS Lectures. Tickets held on the door will not qualify for the advance rate.

## GROUP DISCOUNTS

If you represent a group, school or club and would like a bulk purchase of tickets, please ring the organisers.

## TICKET SALES POINT

Stanfords, 29 Corn Street, Bristol BS1 1HT Tel: 0117 929 9966  
 Email: [superplan\\_bristol@stanfords.co.uk](mailto:superplan_bristol@stanfords.co.uk)  
 Open 9.00-6.00 Monday, Wednesday - Saturday  
 9.30-6.00 Tuesday

Credit cards accepted, cheques must be made out to WilderNESS Lectures. We strongly recommend that you purchase your tickets in advance – several shows in 1999/2000 were sold out. If requesting tickets by post please send a stamped self addressed envelope.

## PRIZE DRAW

Each year we enter all the tickets into a draw which is made on the night of the last lecture. 3 major prizes will be awarded to the winners.

## THE WILDERNESS AWARD

Each year we give a sizeable cash award to an individual who comes up with an exciting travel adventure idea for a unique project to an unusual destination.

## WEB SITE

For all those internet freaks, we now have a WilderNESS Web Site you can visit <http://www.wilderNESSlectures.com>

## LECTURE ORGANISERS

Dick Willis Tel: (01761) 472263 (Home) & 07976 288312 (Mobile)  
 Steve Berry Tel: (01454) 238053 (Home) & (01453) 844400 (Work)

## PARKING

Unfortunately the old car park has been re-developed by the University. However, there is plenty of space in the University Walk (second right off Woodland Road) and other adjacent roads to the rear of the Chemistry Lecture Theatre.